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Biden OKs Alaska oil project, draws ire of environmentalists

By M. DALY/C. MEGERIAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration said Monday it is approving a huge oil-drilling project on Alaska's petroleum-rich North Slope, a major environmental decision by President Joe Biden that drew quick condemnation as flying in the face of his pledges to slow climate change. The announcement came a day after the administration, in a move in the other direction toward conservation, said it would bar or limit drilling in some other areas of Alaska and the Arctic Ocean. The approval of Conoco-Phillips' big Willow drilling project by the Bureau of Land Management will allow three drill sites including up to 199 total wells. Two other drill sites proposed for the project will be denied. ConocoPhillips Chairman and CEO Ryan Lance called the order "the right decision for Alaska and our nation." The Houston-based company will relinquish rights to about 68,000 acres of existing leases in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.



This 2019 aerial photo provided by ConocoPhillips shows an exploratory drilling camp at the proposed site of the Willow oil project on Alaska's North Slope.

Associated Press

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Biden OKs Alaska oil project, draws ire of environmentalists

Continued from Front

The order, one of the most significant of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland's tenure, was not signed by her but rather by her deputy, Tommy Beaudreau, who grew up in Alaska and briefed state lawmakers on the project Monday. Haaland was notably silent on the project, which she had opposed as a New Mexico congresswoman before becoming Interior secretary two years ago. Climate activists were outraged that Biden approved the project, which they say puts his climate legacy at risk. Allowing the drilling plan to go forward marks a major breach of Biden's campaign promise to stop new oil drilling on federal lands, they say.

However, administration officials were concerned that ConocoPhillips' decades-old leases limited the government's legal ability to block the project and that courts might have ruled in the company's favor. Monday's announcement is not likely to be the last word, with litigation expected from environmental groups.

The Willow project could produce up to 180,000 barrels of oil a day, create up to 2,500 jobs during construction and 300 long-term jobs, and generate billions of dollars in royalties and tax revenues for the federal, state and local governments, the company said. The project, located in the federally designated National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, enjoys widespread political support in the state. Alaska's bipartisan congressional delegation met with Biden and his advisers in early March to plead their case for the project, and Alaska Native state lawmakers recently met with Haaland to urge support.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said Monday the decision was "very good news for the country."

"Not only will this mean jobs and revenue for Alaska, it will be resources that are needed for the country



President Joe Biden waves before boarding Air Force One for a trip to San Diego to meet with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Monday, March 13, 2023, in Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

and for our friends and allies," Murkowski said. "The administration listened to Alaska voices. They listened to the delegation as we pressed the case for energy security and national security."

Fellow Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan said conditions attached to the project should not reduce Willow's ability to produce up to 180,000 barrels of crude a day. But he said it was "infuriating" that Biden also had moved to prevent or limit oil drilling elsewhere in Alaska.

Environmental activists who have promoted a #Stop-Willow campaign on social media were fuming at the approval, which they called a betrayal.

"This decision greenlights 92% of proposed oil drilling (by ConocoPhillips) and hands over one of the most fragile, intact ecosystems in the world to" the oil giant, said Earthjustice President Abigail Dillen. "This is not climate leadership."

Biden understands the existential threat of climate change, "but he is approving a project that derails his own climate goals," said Dillen, whose group vowed legal action to block the

project. John Leshy, who was a top Interior Department lawyer in the Clinton administration, said Biden's climate goals aren't the only factor in an environmental review process that agencies must follow.

Leshy, a professor at the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, called the decision on Willow defensible, adding: "I think it reflects a balancing of the things they have to balance, which is the environmental impact and the lease rights that Conoco has."

Christy Goldfuss, a former Obama White House official who now is a policy chief at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said she was "deeply disappointed" at Biden's decision to approve Willow, which the BLM estimates would produce more than 239 million metric tons of greenhouse gases over the project's 30-year life, roughly equal to the combined emissions from 1.7 million passenger cars.

"This decision is bad for the climate, bad for the environment and bad for the Native Alaska communities who oppose this and

feel their voices were not heard," Goldfuss said.

Anticipating that reaction among environmental groups, the White House announced on Sunday that Biden will prevent or limit oil drilling in 16 million acres in Alaska and the Arctic Ocean. The plan would bar drilling in nearly 3 million acres of the Beaufort Sea — closing it off from oil exploration — and limit drilling in more than 13 million acres in the National Petroleum Reserve.

The withdrawal of the offshore area ensures that important habitat for whales, seals, polar bears and other wildlife "will be protected in perpetuity from extractive development," the White House said in a statement. The conservation announcement did little to mollify activists.

"It's a performative action to make the Willow project not look as bad," said Elise Joshi, the acting executive director of Gen-Z for Change, an advocacy organization.

City of Nuiqsut Mayor Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk, whose community of about 525 people is closest to the proposed development, has been outspoken in her

opposition, worried about impacts to caribou and her residents' subsistence lifestyles. "My constituents and community will bear the burden of this project with our health and our livelihoods," she said.

But there is "majority consensus" in the North Slope region supporting the project, said Nagruk Harcharek, president of the group Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat, whose members include leaders from across much of that region.

The conservation actions announced Sunday block drilling in the Beaufort Sea and build on President Barack Obama's actions to restrict drilling there and in the Chukchi Sea.

Separately, the administration moved to protect more than 13 million acres within the petroleum reserve, a 23-million acre chunk of land on Alaska's North Slope set aside a century ago for future oil production. Areas to be protected include the Teshekpuk Lake, Utukok Uplands, Colville River, Kasegaluk Lagoon and Peard Bay Special Areas, which serve as habitat for grizzly and polar bears, caribou and migratory birds. □

Associated Press

US. government ponders the meaning of race and ethnicity

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**
Associated Press

Nyhiem Way is weary of people conflating African American and Black. Shalini Parekh wants a way for South Asian people to identify themselves differently than East Asians with roots in places like China or Japan. And Byron Haskins wants the U.S. to toss racial and ethnic labels altogether.

"When you set up categories that are used to place people in boxes, sometime you miss the truth of them," said Haskins, who describes himself as African American.

Way, Parekh and Haskins' voices are among more than 4,600 comments pending before the Biden administration as it contemplates updating the nation's racial and ethnic categories for the first time since 1997.

There's a lot to consider.

Some Black Americans want their ancestors' enslavement recognized in how they are identified. Some Jewish people believe their identity should be seen as its own ethnic category and not only a religion.



Nyhiem Way, of Athens, Ga., poses for a portrait on Thursday, March 9, 2023, in Athens.

Associated Press

The idea of revising categories for ethnic and racial identities, both in the census and in gathering demographic information between head counts, have fueled editorials and think-tank essays as well as thousands of written comments by individuals in what is almost a Rorschach test for how Americans identify themselves.

The White House's Office

of Management and Budget is set to decide on new classifications next year and is hosting three virtual town halls on the subject this week.

Some conservatives question the process itself, saying the overarching premise that Americans need only accelerate Balkanization.

"By creating and deepen-

ing sub-national identities, the government further contributes to the decline of one national American identity," wrote Mike Gonzalez, a senior fellow at The Heritage Foundation, in his personal comment posted on the OMB web page seeking public input.

That view contrasts sharply with those who say previous categories have overlooked nuances.

"This is certainly a singular moment and opportunity to greatly improve and enhance the accuracy and completeness of the data," Mario Beovides, director of policy and legislative affairs for the NALEO Educational Fund, said during a recent forum.

The proposed changes would create a new category for people of Middle Eastern and North African descent, also known by the acronym MENA, who are now classified as white but say they have been routinely undercounted.

The process also would combine the race and ethnic origin questions into a single query, because some advocates say the current method of asking about race and separately about ethnic origin often confuses Hispanic respondents. With the revisions, the government would try to get more detailed answers on race and ethnicity by asking about country of origin.

Another proposal recommends striking from federal government forms the words "Negro" and "Far East," now widely regarded as pejorative. □

Vice President Harris to visit Africa in latest U.S. outreach

By **CHRIS MEGERIAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris will spend a week in Africa at the end of March as the United States deepens its outreach to the continent amid global competition, notably with China.

"The trip will strengthen the United States' partnerships throughout Africa and advance our shared efforts on security and economic prosperity," said a statement from the vice president's spokesperson, Kirsten Allen. Harris' plans follow visits by first lady Jill Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is going this week, and President Joe Biden is expected

to travel to Africa later this year. However, Harris will be closely watched as the first Black vice president in U.S. history and the first woman to hold the position.

She plans to be in Ghana from March 26 to 29, then in Tanzania from March 29 to 31. Her final stop is Zambia, on March 31 and April 1.

Harris has a personal connection to the third country on her itinerary. Her maternal grandfather worked in Zambia years ago, and she visited him there as a young girl.

Allen said the vice president's agenda will include promoting democracy, climate adaptation, women's economic empowerment and food security.

Besides meeting the presi-

dents of each of the three countries she's visiting, Harris plans to talk with "young leaders, business representatives, entrepreneurs, and members of the African Diaspora," Allen said.

The White House's concerted outreach to the continent began with the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, which it hosted in December. China has invested heavily in Africa, but Washington is pitching itself as a better partner than Beijing. "Our administration will be guided not by what we can do for Africa but what we can do with Africa," Harris said during the summit.

Although competition between the U.S. and China has been the backdrop of much American foreign



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to the African Diaspora Young Leaders Forum, Dec. 13, 2022, at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, in Washington.

Associated Press

policy, the Democratic administration is trying to calibrate its approach to Africa so leaders on the con-

tinent don't feel as though they're being caught in the middle of a geopolitical contest. □

Agents stop crowd at Texas border crossing amid asylum woes

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A large group of migrants in Mexico who were poised to barge into the U.S. over the weekend were blocked from crossing a bridge leading from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to El Paso, Texas, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman said. The migrants were “posing a potential threat to make a mass entry,” and physical barriers were put up to restrict their entry at the Paso Del Norte International Bridge on Sunday afternoon, spokesman Roger Maier said in a statement to The Associated Press on Monday.

Barricades also were used in El Paso for a short time Sunday afternoon at other border crossings including the Bridge of Americas and the Stanton-Lerdo bridge, Maier said.

Video of the scene at the Paso Del Norte bridge on Sunday showed hundreds of migrants brush past Mexican National Guard officers on the Mexican side, some carrying children on their shoulders. Many appeared to be Venezuelan,



Cars line up at the Paso del Norte international bridge in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, below, on the border with El Paso, Texas, top, Nov. 8, 2021.

by their accents. Shouting “We want to get through!” the migrants ran up to the center line of the bridge, where U.S. authorities had erected concrete and plastic barriers strung with concertina wire.

The migrants were stopped by the barrier, and remained on the Mexican side, shouting “Open up for us!” to the U.S. officers. After a time, the migrants ran

back toward the Mexican side.

Traffic was reopened and flowing in both directions as of Sunday evening, Maier said. It wasn’t immediately known what caused the attempted mass crossing. A message seeking comment was left with the mayor’s office in El Paso.

The rush across the bridge may have been sparked by false rumors, said Cami-

lo Cruz, who works with the U.N. migration office in Ciudad Juarez.

Cruz said there was “a rumor that they were going to let them cross massively, particularly people who arrived with children.”

Cruz said the rumors are a recurrent problem. About a month ago, messages began circulating “that there were going to be buses on the U.S. side to take them

to Canada ... and when they arrived, they were told it was a lie.”

The worst thing, Cruz said, is that migrants often leave the shelters where they are staying to attend such mass crossing attempts, only to find the shelters full when they return.

Many of the migrants on Sunday appeared to be asylum seekers. One woman held out what appeared to be an appointment slip at the barricade. Migrants seeking asylum, a legal immigration pathway for people fleeing persecution in their own country, have been frustrated by newly-implemented limits on those showing up at the southwest border, as many Venezuelans do.

There has been frustration with the U.S. government’s CBP One mobile app for making appointments to apply for asylum, which has been overloaded since the Biden administration introduced it Jan. 12. New appointments are available each day at 6 a.m., but migrants find themselves stymied by error messages. □

Associated Press

School pulls test question equating politics to race, gender

By **MATTHEW BARAKAT**
Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) — Virginia’s largest school system is removing a test question given to a college-level social studies

class that equated liberals and conservatives with specific racial and gender demographics.

The question appeared on a test given to students of an AP Government class

at Fairfax County Public Schools’ Online Campus.

The multiple-choice question asked students, “Which of the following is an accurate comparison of liberals versus conservatives?”

The potential answers for “liberals” included “Young, white males;” “Middle aged, urban lesbian;” “College-educated black male professional” and “White, upper-middle class suburban male.”

The potential answers for “conservatives” included “East Coast, Ivy League educated scientists;” “Southern male migrant laborer;” “Catholic, midwestern middle-aged male” and “West coast, Hispanic teacher.” Rory Cooper, a Fairfax County parent and school system critic who posted the question on Twitter, said it is offensive.

“It’s one thing for adults to analyze demographic trends,” he said. “It’s another to tell students that their identity defines their political philosophy.”

The school system said in a statement that the question will be removed from future tests because it “did not meet the division’s high expectations.” It also said all test questions administered to students in the AP Government Online Campus class will now be reviewed.

The statement said the question was “designed to assess 12th graders’ understanding of American political ideology.”

The test is part of an AP, or Advanced Placement, class that allows high-school students to earn college credit if they score well on a final exam.

While the question was part of an AP class, it was not created by the College Board, which administers the AP program nationally. In a tweet, the College Board said the question “is antithetical to the content and format of an AP question.”

Virginia Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears weighed in as well, criticizing the assumptions the question makes about who is liberal and who is conservative. She has frequently bristled at outsiders’ political assumptions about Black women that are at odds with her stance as a conservative Republican and military veteran.

“Tests like these create division, low morale, fights in our schools,” she wrote in one tweet. □



This March 4, 2019 file photo shows Fairfax County Public Schools in Merrifield, Va.

Associated Press

Micronesia's president accuses China of 'political warfare'

By NICK PERRY

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand

(AP) — Micronesia's president accused China of "political warfare" in a letter to other national leaders and discussed switching diplomatic allegiance from China to Taiwan in exchange for \$50 million.

President David Panuelo said China had been using nefarious tactics, including spying and offering bribes, in an effort to ensure that if it goes to war with Taiwan, Micronesia would be aligned with China rather than the United States, or would at least abstain from taking sides.

Panuelo sent the 13-page letter dated March 9, which was obtained by The Associated Press, to state governors and other political leaders of the Pacific nation.

The letter represented an unusually frank assessment of China's motives in the region and laid bare the financial incentives for smaller countries to switch diplomatic allegiance.

Should Micronesia switch allegiance to Taiwan, it would represent a rare win for the self-governing island, after several Pacific nations



President of Micronesia David Panuelo addresses the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, at U.N. headquarters on Sept. 22, 2022.

switched allegiance from Taiwan to China in recent years.

"I believe that our values are presently being used against us" Panuelo wrote in his letter. "One of the reasons that China's political warfare is successful in so many arenas is that we are bribed to be complicit, bribed to be silent."

He gave examples, saying that when the vice president was a senator, he was asked by China's ambassa-

dor to accept an envelope filled with money, which he refused.

China denied the allegations.

"We noted relevant reports, in which the smear and accusations against China are completely inconsistent with the facts," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing Friday. "We've always respected Micronesia's development path that it has chosen in light of

its own national conditions and have supported the Micronesian side in safeguarding independence," Mao said.

Panuelo gave other examples of what he called China's "grey zone" activities. He said that Chinese research vessels had been operating inside Micronesia's ocean territory to spy, by mapping potential resources and submarine travel paths.

He said that when he trav-

eled to Fiji in July to attend the Pacific Islands Forum, he was followed around by two Chinese men, who Micronesia discovered worked for the Chinese Embassy in Fiji and included an intelligence officer.

"To be clear: I have had direct threats against my personal safety from PRC (People's Republic of China) officials acting in an official capacity," Panuelo wrote. He said that in February, he met with Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu and told him that Micronesia would need money for its trust fund if it was to switch diplomatic allegiance.

"I was transparent with Foreign Minister Wu; we project we need an injection of approximately \$50 million to meet our future needs," Panuelo wrote. "We can and will receive this, over a three-year period, if and when we establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan." He said Micronesia would also receive an annual \$15 million assistance package and Taiwan would take over various projects that China had begun, including a national convention center, two state government complexes, and two gyms. □

Associated Press

Report: Ukraine world's 3rd biggest arms importer in 2022

By JARI TANNER

Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) —

Russia's invasion of Ukraine that has led to a substantial flow of military aid to Kyiv from the United States and Europe made Ukraine the world's third largest importer of arms in 2022, a Swedish think tank said Monday.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, reported that from 1991, when Ukraine became independent amid the fall of the Soviet Union, until the end of 2021, Ukraine imported few major arms.

But Moscow's invasion on Feb. 24 last year markedly changed that. Only Qatar which has dramatically ramped up its arms pur-

chasing in the past decade and India imported more arms in the year, SIPRI said in its report on global arms transfers.

Pieter Wezeman, senior researcher with the SIPRI Arms Transfers Program noted that even as arms transfers declined globally last year, "those to Europe have risen sharply due to the tensions between Russia and most other European states." He said that following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, European states want to import more arms, "faster."

SIPRI said that the export of arms has long been dominated by the United States and Russia with the two countries being the largest and second-largest arms exporters for the past three

decades.

However, the gap between the two has been widening significantly, while that between Russia and the third largest arms supplier, France, has narrowed. The think tank said it was likely that the invasion of Ukraine will further limit Russia's arms exports due to Moscow's need to prioritize supplying its own armed forces and low demand from other states due to trade sanctions.

SIPRI's data showed that U.S. arms exports increased by 14% between the periods 2013-17 and 2018-22, and Washington accounted for 40% of global arms exports in 2018-22.

Meanwhile, Russia's arms exports fell by 31% be-

tween the two periods, and its share of global arms exports decreased from 22% to 16%, while France's share increased from 7.1% to 11%.

SIPRI, established in 1966, is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. □



A Ukrainian paratrooper of 95 Air Assault brigade aims to fire by MSLR BM-21 "Grad" towards Russian positions at the frontline near Kreminna, Ukraine, Thursday, March 9, 2023.

Associated Press

U.N. inquiry commission: Quake aid was slow to reach Syria

By **JAMEY KEATEN** and **BASSEM MROUE**

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The international community and the Syrian government did not act quickly enough last month to help people in need in the rebel-held northwest after a deadly earthquake hit Turkey and conflict-ravaged Syria, a U.N.-backed commission said Monday.

The Feb. 6 magnitude 7.8 earthquake and strong aftershocks that ravaged southern Turkey and northwestern Syria killed more than 50,000 people, including over 6,000 in Syria.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria said there should be an investigation into why it took a week to open border crossings for aid to flow.

It added that war-torn Syria "now needs a comprehensive cease-fire that is fully respected" for civilians, including aid workers, to be safe.

The commission also said there have been new attacks in Syria, including a reported Israeli airstrike last week on the international airport of the northern city of Aleppo putting it out of service for three days. The



Brazilian Paulo Pinheiro, centre, Chairperson of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, sitting between commission members Hanny Megally of Egypt, left, and Lynn Welchman of Britain, right, talks to the media during a press conference before presenting the last report by the commission on the human rights situation in Syria at the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council, at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, March 13, 2023.

Associated Press

airport has been a main point for aid flowing into Syria and flights were diverted to two other airports when it was closed.

The commission is made up of outside, independent experts who have been working under a mandate from the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council since nearly the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011.

It took a week for the U.N. and the government of Syria's President Bashar Assad to agree on opening two more border crossings into the rebel-held region bordering Turkey as many people were still under the rubble.

"Since the earthquake, we have seen many acts to help victims by the Syrians themselves," commission

member Paulo Pinheiro said during a news conference in Geneva.

He added that "we also witnessed a complete failure by the government and the international community including United Nations to rapidly direct urgent lifesaving aid for northwest Syria."

"Many days were lost without any aid to survivors of

the earthquake," Pinheiro said. "Actors didn't rapidly direct urgent lifesaving aid to northwest Syria which became the epicenter of neglect."

A week after the earthquake, the U.N. announced that Syrian President Bashar Assad agreed to open for three months two new crossing points from Turkey to the country's rebel-held northwest to deliver desperately needed aid and equipment to help earthquake victims. Before that, the U.N. had only been allowed to deliver aid to the northwest Idlib area through a single crossing at Bab Al-Hawa, at Syrian ally Russia's insistence.

"They failed to deliver international emergency support including rescue teams and equipment in the vital first week after the earthquake," Pinheiro said, adding that "Syrians, for good reasons, felt abandoned and neglected by those who (are) supposed to protect them in their most desperate time."

"Many voices are rightly calling ... for an investigation and accountability to understand how this failure, this disaster happened beyond the earthquake," Pinheiro said. □

Mexican president says his country safer than United States

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president claimed Monday that his country is safer than the United States, a week after two U.S. citizens were killed and two kidnapped and later rescued in the border city of Matamoros.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said U.S. travel warnings and reports of violence in Mexico were the result of a conspiracy by conservative politicians and U.S. media outlets to smear his administration.

Despite López Obrador's assurances that Mexico was safe for travel, the FBI confirmed last week that three other women from the small Texas town of Peñitas have been missing in

Mexico since late February. "Mexico is safer than the United States," López Obrador said at his morning

news briefing. "There is no problem in traveling safely in Mexico." Mexico's nationwide homicide rate is

about 28 per 100,000 inhabitants. By comparison, the U.S. homicide rate is barely one-quarter as high, at around 7 per 100,000.

The president brushed off continued concern over violence. Currently, the U.S. State Department has "do not travel" advisories for six of Mexico's 32 states plagued by drug cartel violence, and "reconsider travel" warnings for another seven states. "This is a campaign against Mexico by these conservative politicians in the United States who do not want the transformation of our country to continue," López Obrador said.

The Mexican president included U.S. media outlets in

the supposed conspiracy.

"These conservative politicians ... dominate the majority of the news media in the United States," he said. "This violence is not a reality," he added. "It is pure, vile manipulation."

As if to undercut that statement, police in the industrial and farming state of Guanajuato reported that 8 people had been shot to death and another seven wounded in an attack on a nightclub over the weekend. The attack late Saturday killed six men and two women at the club in the largely rural township of Apaseo El Grande, where rival cartels have been fighting for control for years. □



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador gives his regularly scheduled morning press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City, Feb. 28, 2023.

Associated Press

Activities for National Hymn and Flag Day on March 18th announced

(Oranjestad)—During a press conference, the different activities that will take place in the next couple of days were announced. This all ties into the celebrations for National Hymn and Flag Day on March 18th. This year, the slogan for this celebration is "Union is the force behind our beloved island rock."

The president of the Celebratory Committee for National Holidays (CCDN), Lyonel Dirksz, informed that there will be various activities that will be organized by the committee. This included the Hymn and Flag festival which took place this past weekend on Plaza Betico Croes, and also includes "Poeta di Patria", which takes place March 15th, the cultural manifestation on March 17th and the protocol performance on March 18th.

In terms of the cultural manifestation, Dirksz pointed out that this will start from 6:30pm, where there will be more than 40 tents that selling traditional food, sweets and art works. There will also be live musical performances by different artists and groups during this activity, which is set to end around 10:30pm.



The musical academy Harpa y Cuarta will open this musical program, which begins around 8pm when the members of the government arrive. The Culture Orchestra will be accompanied by various artists in the community and also the Tumba and Soca Kings from this year's carnival festivities.

On March 18th, the activities will begin early in the morning, where the protocol performance will take place at Plaza Betico Croes. There will be children's choirs from schools in Santa Cruz, including Colegio Laura Wernet Paskel, Colegio San Hose and Maria School. They will be accompanied by the Tuti-fruti choir, the youth band

that will perform alongside the children from Caribbean Combo and students from the Rufo Wever Music School.

After the protocol performances, there will be a march of local girl and boy scouts. After this, the public will continue their celebrations with all sorts of activities around the island.

Junior Arends, vice-president of CCDN, expressed that the event for Poeta di Patria will take place on March 15th at the Cas di Cultura in the down town area. There will also be a painting contest for primary and elementary schools around the island. For this contest, there will be different categories, namely "primary schools", "el-

ementary schools 1st and 2nd grade", "elementary schools 3rd and 4th grade" and "elementary schools 5th and 6th grade."

Exposition Aruban Diaspora at the National Archives Raymond Hernandez, director of the National Archives Aruba, informed that March 18th is celebrated every year (with the exception of the two years of the pandemic). The activities organized by them will include an exhibition where they will discuss various topics they feel are very important for the public to know, especially on this celebratory day.

This year, the focus will be on the descendents of the Aruban: where everyone comes from. "That's why

the exhibition carries the name 'Aruban Diaspora', where we begin exploring the first visitors of the island that later became inhabitants up until the modern world of today. This is when we see people from around the world who have immigrated here and that now form part of our country," he stated.

They will also focus in the history of slavery starting from March 18th to July 1st, which will open the commemoration of slavery within the Dutch Kingdom. March 18th will show the community the different facets that played a role in the migration of people to the island, as well as certain moments where people have left the island. □

Origin of Papiamentu- Aruba's native language

ORANJESTAD — Papiamentu, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (linings and slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean. Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting stories, wanting to link Papiamentu direct-

ly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamentu, on Wikipedia - Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamentu), in fact, this is not true. Papiamentu is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You can see this best when it's saying obscene words and offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands. The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch. Also the PapiCristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last two releases to the English), all

originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable - Verdeans (linings and slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quincentist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study from primary education to higher education. However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time, that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermine Mountains, but not much

speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillans and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamentu, PapiCristang, PatuáMacanense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some places in Indonesia, are creoles of the language family Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language) and indirectly the Galaico-Duriense or Galaico-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century. □

Anonymous
Source: Dushi Aruba

HNLMS Holland intercepted drugs in the Caribbean Sea



Dutch Navy ship HNLMS Holland executed a drug interdiction on the 25th of February, in cooperation with the Colombian navy the Caribbean Sea.

The go-fasts were discovered by a maritime patrol aircraft from the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard and a helicopter from the Colombian navy. HNLMS Holland sent an embarked he-

licopter from the US Coast Guard and the FRISC, a fast speedboat, with a combined team of the ships' crew and embarked US Coast Guard law enforcement detachment. After giving stop signals, the go-fast wasn't willing to stop. After the firing of some warning shots the suspected smugglers surrendered. The second go-fast was stopped by the Colombian



Navy ship ARC Victoria. A total of 800 kilograms cocaine were seized.

The suspected smugglers and contraband were prosecuted in the United States. The suspected smugglers will be transferred to US Coast Guard custody. The sus-

Aruba Tourism Authority honor a loyal visitor at the Costa Linda Beach Resort



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure to recognize a Goodwill Ambassador of Aruba. This Ambassador was respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging her years of visits, loyalty, and love to the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests whom have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honoree was:

Goodwill Ambassador Mrs. Anne Babcock from Massachusetts, United States. Mrs. Babcock has been coming to the island for 30 years consecutively.

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Costa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the Ambassador certification to the honoree, presented her with gifts, and also thanked her for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination and her home-away-from-home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the honoree was:

- Aruba's warm & friendly people - Natives
- Aruba's Year-round sunny weather
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- The friends I made at the Costa Linda



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Fresh fish right out of the Caribbean Sea to your plate



ORANJESTAD – Fish restaurants are everywhere, but do they serve fresh fish daily right out of the Caribbean Sea? The Grand Fish Restaurant does. This locally-owned restaurant is situated merely 5 minutes from the strip and is open as early as 11am for the lunch lovers.

The minute you step inside you can feel the homey and cozy warm ambiance by the décor and the friendly staff who will receive you with open arms.

The Grand Fish Restaurant has an extraordinary menu starting with appetizers, salads and their famous fish soup. The entree dishes consist of a variety of fresh fish like whole red snapper, fish steak, fish cake, grilled salmon, mixed seafood or seafood rice (paella local style) combined with sides of vegetables, french fries, rice, plantain, the island's traditional 'pan bati' (slapped bread) or funchi (cornmeal cake).

Each and every dish is made with passion, love and dedication. Yes... even the fried ones! There are also pasta, meat and poultry options plus a kid-friendly menu with crispy chicken or fish nuggets, cheese burgers, mac & cheese and kid tenderloin.

Pair your meal with your favorite drink or cocktail, a

wine of your choice or a glass of The Grand Fish yummy homemade fresh lemonade.

If you haven't visited The Grand Fish yet, check out our local page for a coupon for a free glass of wine and make sure to drop by. The staff will be happy to welcome, guide and serve you for an amazing casual bite and good time.

The Grand Fish Restaurant is situated at Taratata Road 15, unit #1. Open from 11AM – 10PM from Wednesday till Monday CLOSED on Tuesdays!!!



Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out to **Heather and Margaret from Ottawa, Canada**, who say they love the people and beaches of the island. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!

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Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower



in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San

Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barber-shop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba

that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment. Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how are Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a

place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world.

Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.

Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Cosecha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □



The Aruban Olympic Committee inaugurates new office

(Oranjestad)—On Saturday morning, the inauguration by the Olympic Committee Aruba (COA) of their new building took place. This event was attended by the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, and the president of Panam Sports, Neven Ilic.

During the event, there was a sports fair where different sports clubs and organizations presented the different types of sports played on Aruba. This included bowling, taekwondo, weightlifting, chess, gymnastics and more. The president of the IOC passed by all the different presentations and engaged with some of the athletes and coaches there.

During the official ceremony of the inauguration, the minister of Sports, Endy Croes, congratulated the COA and all involved in this big accomplishment for the organization of inaugurating their new office. He expressed that as the minister of Sports, he shares the vision of the COA, which is the wellbeing and the development of sports and Olympic athletes on the island.

"Sports are a powerful tool. It is also a vehicle that not only drives good people in society, but also creates exemplary leader in the community and for countries around the world. That is why we as the government of Aruba support the development of sports in the future," he stated.

"We are extremely happy to be here today. I stand



before you with goose bumps, because we have waited so long for this office to be the committee's official headquarters," as the president of the COA, Wanda Broeksma, expressed.

During her speech, Broeksma expressed that their mission is to keep inspiring the athletes, federations, coaches and leaders, and to fortify the Olympic values.

Michelle Hoeverts, vice-president of the ICO and treasurer of the COA, ratified the happiness that the committee and everyone involved feels about the opening of this new office. "We had a dream: we wanted to make sports important. We wanted to give sports the value it deserves—not for us, but for the athletes. That's why we do what we do."

She explained that the



COA was already situated in this building for 4 years, but have not inaugurated the building until now so that they can add an Olympic touch to the design of the building. She indicated that they have chosen the specific location of the building, because it is located next to a busy street and it is close to several schools and the

national library. According to Hoeverts, the inauguration that took place on Saturday was phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 is the construction of the sports museum so that they could invite schools around the island to visit and learn about the history and importance of sports.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are home; we have found our home. This is the home of the COA, this is the home of sports, this is the home for everything Olympic on Aruba," Hoeverts stated.

During his speech, Mr. Bach took the opportunity to congratulate the COA with the inauguration and to remark that this will help the association turn a new page in the history of the COA.

"With this campus, the COA will be in a much better condition to serve the athletes, to serve the teams that participate in the Central American and the Caribbean Games, in the PanAmerican Games and hopefully, the Olympic Games," he indicated.

He expressed that this achievement by the COA shows their commitment to sports and the athletes, who learn the value of sports and pay attention to all the important aspects in sports.

At the same time, Bach acknowledged the work done by the two female leaders of the COA—Hoeverts and Broeksma—and have honored them with the IOC Presidents Trophy for the sustainable work that they have achieved.

CAO was established in 1985, when Aruba seceded from the Dutch Antilles. Before that, Aruba was represented by the Antillean Olympic Committee (NAOC). In 1986, Aruba received recognition from the IOC and finally on Saturday, March 11th, received the official plaque for this recognition.

From 1994 up until this year, the office of the COA was located in the Guillermo Prospero Trinidad Sports Complex. This was an office in deterioration, just like the rest of the stadium, which have recently begun remodeling. For health reasons, the COA also took the decision to abandon the office in the sports complex. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Planet's path
- 6 Trivial
- 11 One of the strings
- 12 Put on a pedestal
- 13 Ibsen play
- 15 Rent out
- 16 Rap's — Nas X
- 17 Silent assent
- 18 Apple centers
- 20 Smallest mammal
- 23 African charger
- 27 Bucket
- 28 Persia, today
- 29 Really stoked
- 31 Hang loosely
- 32 Sired
- 34 Cry loudly
- 37 "The Matrix" hero
- 38 Carnival city
- 41 Ibsen play
- 44 Central
- 45 Shady spot
- 46 Cowboy contest
- 47 African scavenger

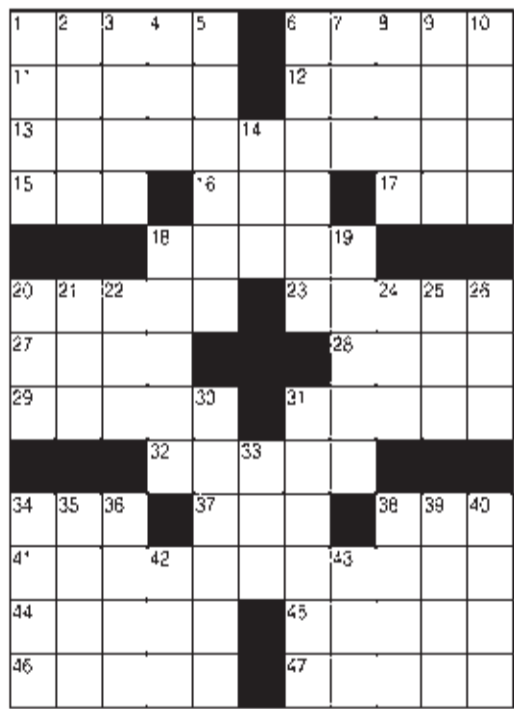
DOWN

- 1 Track shape
- 2 Take the bus
- 3 Wader, e.g.
- 4 Ailing
- 5 Animal suet
- 6 Composer Gustav
- 7 Wedding words
- 8 Person, place, or thing
- 9 Words of approximation
- 10 Oboe part
- 14 Knight's address
- 18 Star
- 19 Polo, for one



Yesterday's answer

- 20 Relaxing resort
- 21 Deli meat
- 22 Tear
- 24 S&L offering
- 25 Snooze
- 26 Count start
- 30 "Raging Bull" star
- 31 "Camp-town Races" snippet
- 33 Hair goo
- 34 Blend
- 35 Cry of distress
- 36 Flex
- 38 Bumpkin
- 39 File stand-in
- 40 Gumbo vegetable
- 42 Tiny
- 43 Use a towel



3-14

A XYDI B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

F V C Y X V S V P I T G V W I I G I I Q V

Y B C N H M T V I Z X V B I I T M V .

— B W J J W A W Y X I B B W

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: AMATEURS SIT AND WAIT FOR INSPIRATION; THE REST OF US JUST GET UP AND GO TO WORK. — STEPHEN KING



In this March 25, 2021 file photo, shoppers browse in New York. Associated Press

Kimberly Palmer: How to fight the 'pink tax' amid inflation

By KIMBERLY PALMER of NerdWallet

Trae Bodge, a shopping expert who lives in the New York City area, sees higher prices for products and services marketed to women everywhere: Socks, razors, shampoo and apparel are a few of the product types aimed at women that tend to cost more.

"I don't know why brands think this is acceptable," Bodge says. "It's another punch to the gut as we're trying to manage our budgets right now," she adds, referring to rising prices across consumer goods categories due to inflation.

The phenomenon known as the "pink tax," when products and services aimed at women cost more than their counterparts aimed at men, is well-documented across many goods and services. A 2021 paper co-authored by Stephanie Gonzalez Guittar, assistant professor in the sociology department at Rollins College in Florida, found that women pay more for deodorants and lotions, and that personal care products are increasingly differentiated by gender. For example, lotion for women cost an average of \$2.97 per ounce compared to \$1.86 for men. While Equal Pay Day on March 14 focuses on the pay gap between men and women, it can also be a reminder to consider why being a woman so often comes with a higher price tag and what to do about it.

Here are ways to avoid paying the pink tax. □

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'The Last of Us' TV adaptation resonates beyond gamers

By **KARENA PHAN**

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In the HBO series "The Last of Us," a fungal infection has taken over Earth, rendering the United States an apocalyptic landscape protagonists Joel and Ellie need to traverse. Fans unfamiliar with the video game, from which the series was adapted, might assume this is just another zombie show packed with action and gore.

However, the story and the characters have subverted expectations and received praise from all corners. "The Last of Us," whose first season concluded Sunday, has not only won over gamers with high expectations, but also people who don't play video games. The series premiere drew 4.7 million viewers in the U.S., based on Nielsen and HBO data, making for HBO's second-largest debut, behind "House of the Dragon."

"No one could have anticipated this, this reaction and how positive it's been and how broad it's been in its reach," said Neil Druckmann, Naughty Dog co-president and the creator and writer of the video game, whose critically acclaimed first installment was



This image released by HBO shows Bella Ramsey, left, and Pedro Pascal in a scene from the series "The Last of Us."

released on Playstation 3 a decade ago.

"And to see a whole bunch of new people connecting with these characters ... and hearing how they interpret the material and what they like or not like, it's just been really fascinating to me," said Druckmann, who was also the co-creator, writer and an executive producer on the show. The show explores relatable themes like coming of age, grief, finding hope and parenthood. It's not all about zombies the Infected cre-

ate the conflict, but aren't the only antagonists, for there are worse and scarier things lurking in this apocalypse.

The emotional plot and complex characters have resonated with fans outside the traditional genres the series fits into.

"I'm actually kind of afraid of horror and zombie things and whatnot. Normally, I wouldn't watch that type of show," said Victoria Jin, a 24-year-old law student. Jin never played the game but started watching the

show with friends; what made her stay invested was the third episode, which explores the relationship between survivalist Bill (Nick Offerman) and his partner Frank (Murray Bartlett). The standout episode told a story of love and hope in a grim world. "It's the drama, there's a lot of heartbreak, there's human emotion and relationships, and that definitely is what keeps me coming back to it," Jin said. "And just like, come on, Pedro Pascal. I feel like that should be enough of a

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draw on itself."

The performances haven't gone unnoticed by fans, who are already speculating about Emmy nominations for both Pascal and Bella Ramsey, who plays Ellie (between his character Joel and his role on Disney Plus' "The Mandalorian," Pascal has become the internet's favorite dad).

"I think, because it's focused on those character arcs and relationships, and how the story world puts pressure to force those forward, those things are really accessible and universal," said Tucker, the creator of the YouTube channel Lessons from the Screenplay. The television format allows the plot and characters to develop slowly, unlike a movie.

With a video game played for hours, that length helps the viewers develop empathy toward the characters. Video games being recognized as a form of storytelling isn't new. Kim Shay, 26, isn't a gamer, but she saw social media buzz around the video game years before the HBO series was even announced. She watched full playthrough videos of the game on YouTube and was immediately captivated by the story. □



Bill Nighy arrives at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

-By The Associated Press
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Small and subtle, the blue ribbons worn by many celebrities at the Oscars nonetheless had an important message: support refugees. According to a statement from the U.N. High Commis-

sioner for Refugees, donning the #WithRefugees ribbons Sunday "sends a powerful visual message that everyone has the right to seek safety, wherever, whenever they are." The ribbons were made

The meaning behind the blue ribbons worn at the Oscars

by Knotty Tie Co., which the agency says provides employment, training and education to refugees resettled in the Denver area. "In many of the films nominated at festivals and awards ceremonies this season, the human themes of conflict, separation and loss are present," the agency said in the statement, citing movies like "Avatar: The Way of Water" and "Marcel the Shell with Shoes On."

"Through effective storytelling, these films help erode discrimination and misunderstandings, offer new perspectives and help to build compassion for peo-

ple forced to flee," the statement continued.

The number of displaced people globally now tops 103 million, a figure augmented by significant factors like Russia's war in Ukraine, other conflicts around the world and climate change.

Best supporting actor Ke Huy Quan, born in Vietnam, referenced his own story of being a refugee during his acceptance speech.

"My journey started on a boat. I spent a year in a refugee camp," Quan said. "Somehow, I ended up here on Hollywood's biggest stage. They say stories like this only happen in the

movies. I cannot believe it's happening to me. This THIS is the American dream."

Like other U.N. agencies, UNHCR has a long history of celebrity engagement most famously, Angelina Jolie was the refugee agency's lone special envoy until parting ways last year. Best actress nominee Cate Blanchett is a goodwill ambassador for UNHCR. But on Friday, U.N. spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric put in a plug for a goodwill ambassador from a different agency the U.N. Development Programme. When asked whether he had a favorite for best picture, he demurred. □

Connor McDavid puts NHL on notice with goal-scoring frenzy

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

Connor McDavid is must-see entertainment and not just for hockey fans.

The best player in the world is having such an off-the-charts year that his peers can't help but watch his highlights. The Edmonton Oilers captain has already set career highs with 55 goals and 127 points, and there are still 15 games left in the regular season.

"He's from a different planet," Washington Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin said.

McDavid's latest act has been as a goal-scorer after spending his first seven NHL seasons as more of a playmaker. He's shooting first, asking questions later and making the entire league take notice.

"He's dominating," Pittsburgh Penguins captain Sidney Crosby said. "He just continues to get better. And as any player, that's what you want. But when it's a guy like that, it's scary."

Trying to defend McDavid is a scary proposition for opponents, and it has been since he broke into the league in 2015 with his dazzling stick work and blinding speed. He has already won the Hart Trophy as MVP twice and four times took home the Art Ross Trophy



Edmonton Oilers centre Connor McDavid (97) skates the ice during a break in play against the Toronto Maple Leafs during the third period of an NHL hockey game Saturday, March 11, 2023, in Toronto.

for the most points in a season.

McDavid is authoring another MVP-worthy season this time while running away with the goal-scoring title. Much like he focused on improving in the faceoff circle and rounding out his two-way game in previous years, he made a concerted effort to score more himself and surpassed the 50-goal mark for the first time in his career.

"I've never been an elite goal-scorer," McDavid said. "I've kind of always been a pass-first guy. I kind

of always said that I take the best available play, but this year I just feel like I've been put in some good spots, obviously playing with some good players, and the puck's going in. I think that's ultimately just the difference."

The difference between McDavid and the next-closest scorer, teammate Leon Draisaitl, is 29 points. Boston's David Pastrnak ranks second in the league in goals and he's still nine back of McDavid.

After six multigoal games in his last 10, McDavid is on

pace for the highest single-season total since the salary cap era began in 2005, surpassing the 65 Ovechkin scored in 2007-08. Ovechkin, who trails only Wayne Gretzky on the career goals list and is 79 away from breaking the record, marvels at what McDavid is doing.

"How he play the game, how he control the puck, how he control the speed, he's fun to watch," Ovechkin said. "It's great that he's able to show not only one year, but he's consistently doing that over and over."

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Crosby, himself a two-time MVP and three-time Stanley Cup winner, is impressed by McDavid's eagerness to evolve. Dallas Stars coach Peter DeBoer uses McDavid as an example for young players of how to isolate a weakness and turn into a strength.

"I think that's a lesson for everybody that this guy just wasn't touched by the hand of God with talent," DeBoer said.

"He's worked at it and at his game, at getting better."

Dylan Strome witnessed McDavid honing aspects of his game when they were junior teammates in Erie, Pennsylvania.

"He's finding new ways to become more creative," Strome said. "Sometimes you wonder what more can he do?"

Strome, now playing with Ovechkin in Washington, sees McDavid scoring from different angles, shooting from further away from the net and attempting more one-timers.

Some of that came from watching Crosby, reigning MVP Auston Matthews and others, and studying how they shoot the puck.

"So many guys go about it so many different ways," McDavid said. "It's always a chance to learn, watching other guys." □

'Fosbury Flop' high jumper Dick Fosbury dies at 76

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
AP National Writer

Dick Fosbury, the lanky leaper who completely revamped the technical discipline of high jump and won an Olympic gold medal with his "Fosbury Flop," has died. He was 76.

Fosbury died Sunday after a recurrence with lymphoma, according to his publicist, Ray Schulte.

Before Fosbury, high jumpers cleared their heights by running parallel to bar, then leaping over with a scissors kick, often with their faces pointed downward. At the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, he took off at an angle,

leaped backward, bent himself into a "J" shape to catapult his 6-foot-4 frame over the bar, then landed head-first on the mat.

Fosbury cleared 2.24 meters (7 feet, 4 1/4 inches) in Mexico City to win the gold and set an Olympic record. By the next Olympics, 28 of the 40 jumpers were using Fosbury's technique. Today, it is by far the most-used technique for elite high jumpers across the globe.

"The world legend is probably used too often," sprint great Michael Johnson tweeted. "Dick Fosbury was a true LEGEND! He

changed an entire event forever with a technique that looked crazy at the time but the result made it the standard."

Fosbury started tinkering with a new technique as a teenager at Medford High School in Oregon. Among his discoveries over the years was a need to move his takeoff point farther back for higher jumps. Most jumpers planted a foot and took off at the same spot regardless of the height.

Fosbury's technique took a while to catch on. The term "Fosbury Flop" is credited to the Medford Mail-Tribune, which wrote the headline

"Fosbury Flops Over the Bar" after one of his high school meets. The reporter

that day wrote that Fosbury looked like a fish flopping in a boat. □



Dick Fosbury, of the United States, clears the bar in the high jump competition at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.

Associated Press

Scheffler on another big run, this one getting attention

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla.

(AP) — Scottie Scheffler finally won, and then he kept winning, and the question a year ago was when this incredible hot streak would finally cool.

Now comes another question: Did it ever?

Even with a green jacket that ended last year's remarkable run — four victories in six starts, capped by a Masters so dominant he four-putted the last hole and still won by three shots he reached the top so quickly that it was tougher to appreciate it than a slow, steady rise like Dustin Johnson or Rory McIlroy or Jon Rahm.

The Players Championship brings a different view of the No. 1 player in the world. Scheffler is on another big run, this one getting far more attention.

He won the WM Phoenix Open for the second straight year on a Sunday that featured Rahm, Justin Thomas and Nick Taylor. He was one foot away from a close birdie chance on the 18th to tie for the lead at Bay Hill.

And then against the strongest field so far this year at the TPC Sawgrass, Scheffler seized control with a 65 on Saturday and really showed his mettle by turn-



Scottie Scheffler celebrates after winning The Players Championship golf tournament, Sunday, March 12, 2023, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

ing The Players Championship into a runaway with a five-shot victory.

Of the final four groups, his 69 was the only score under par. "I think the team around him and the way he's wired ... he's extremely grounded," Jordan Spieth said. "He's got really good parents, great family structure. Randy Smith has been around for a long time his coach and he's been with him forever. So I don't see it changing. He's in a good position to be able to continue to do this for awhile." Scheffler was easy to forget

last year even while staying atop the world ranking from March to October because the Masters was his last win of the year. Easily overlooked was that he lost in a playoff at Colonial to a 45-foot putt by Sam Burns and was one putt away from a potential playoff at the U.S. Open.

More memorable was losing a six-shot lead in the final round of the Tour Championship at East Lake to McIlroy, which cost Scheffler the FedEx Cup.

"I had put myself in a position all year to where I

had a chance to win the FedEx Cup, and I wasn't able to get it done," Scheffler said. "And by the time I got home, I was worn out. I was mentally, physically drained, emotionally drained.

"But the hard times make the good times that much sweeter."

Now he has six wins in his last 27 starts, and 16 finishes in the top 10 during that span. "His top 10s are off the charts," Spieth said.

This stretch of golf could be traced to the Ryder Cup in the fall of 2021 at Whistling

Straits. Steve Stricker was torn between Scheffler and good friend Sam Burns for his last picks, which doesn't seem like much of a debate now.

While it was an American rout, one of the more pivotal moments was Saturday afternoon when Scheffler made two big putts on the closing holes of a fourballs win that felt like the end for Europe (and it was). Then, he handed Rahm his first loss of the week in singles. That prompted Brooks Koepka to refer to him as a "big-game hunter."

He has a big game off the tee. He delivers with his long irons — nothing was prettier than Scheffler's 3-iron to 15 feet for birdie on the par-3 eighth on Saturday — and his short game is exquisite. As a boy, Scheffler would watch tour pros at Royal Oaks in Dallas and challenge them to money games (coins, no doubt, at that age).

He also is bold. One remarkable aspect to Scheffler's game Sunday was taking on every shot, regardless of his lead. He hit driver on No. 6 (with a three-shot lead) and No. 15 (with a five-shot lead). He also went for the green on the par-4 12th with water down the left side. His 3-wood was right where he was aiming, right of the green, setting up a fifth straight birdie. □

AP source: Browns restructure Watson contract, re-sign Pocic

By **TOM WITHERS**

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) —

The Cleveland Browns shifted some of the money they owe Deshaun Watson so they can spend more on players to help him.

The Browns restructured the quarterback's record-setting \$230 million contract to create salary-cap space ahead of NFL free agency, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Monday.

The Browns always have had the ability to convert Watson's base salary (\$46 million in 2023) to a signing bonus and created \$36 million of room, according to

the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the team

is not publicly disclosing any information. Teams are permitted to reach agree-



Cleveland Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson (4) looks to pass during an NFL football game, Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023, in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Associated Press

ments with free agents for two days before signings can become official starting Wednesday. Following a 7-10 season, the Browns are expected to sign some defensive linemen and perhaps another wide receiver for Watson.

Another priority was resigning center Ethan Pocic, and the Browns locked the 27-year-old up by agreeing to bring him back on a three-year deal, said the person who has direct knowledge of the team's plans. Pocic had a strong 2022 season with the Browns, who were in a bind at center after they released veteran JC Tretter

and projected starter Nick Harris suffered a season-ending knee injury in the exhibition opener.

Pocic stepped in and anchored Cleveland's solid line, which includes All-Pro left guard Joel Bitonio and steady right tackle Jack Conklin, who signed a four-year, \$60 million extension in December.

Watson's restructuring was expected because it was the easiest way for the Browns to clear space after being roughly \$14 million over the salary cap. General manager Andrew Berry recently said the restructuring of Watson's deal was "on the table." □